1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

name which was kept secret and never spoken except in states of possession or when the obia man called on a person's spirit. For girls, Amba for a Saturday child, Affi for one born on Friday, Adjuba for Wednesday; and for the boys some of the names were Kwaku, for Monday, Yao for Thursday, Kofi for Friday, and Kwasi for Sunday. Then there was the name which the father gave, and after that any of the family who cared added a name and made the child a present.

From the day it was born until it was at least two years old a child fed at its mother's breast. For twelve moons and five more of this time the woman could not go to the hammock with a man. It was then that her husband went to the distant French shore to work or to the railhead. But after seventeen months of nursing were past, he came back.

"If a child is made before a woman gets back her menstrual flow, then it is a god. It is Kesefu. A child born feet first some call Agosu, and some Asaeng. The child born after twins we call Dosu, and twins are Hohobi. Now it is in your book. You will give those names to your children, and your sister's children. No one will know at all what names these are. No one will be able to harm them."

6

In the quarter immediately adjoining that of the Granman there was great activity. Six or seven men and boys were at work on a new house, for the youngest daughter of the family was ready for marrying, and now the men were helping her suitor to build a house for her in her village.

From the same quarter, behind a house which stood in the shade, came the laughter of young girls. We made our way past the house and saw four girls ranging in age from thirteen to sixteen seated on a log. One of these held her head back, and an older girl was bending over her. They called to us as we passed.

"We are cutting kamemba. Do you want some cuts, too?"

These were not new cuts which were being made, for with perhaps one exception, the girls were all nubile, and

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

832 Company, some ninety miles in the interior, we were informed by the physician in charge that it is not infrequent to have Bush Negro women report for internal disturbances, which upon examination prove to be irritation and small hæmorrhagic areas. The physician believed that this condition was due to the men's practice of using the mucca-mucca seed.

844 During childbirth the mother stays in her own hut. She is often attended by her mother, her female relatives, and friends. In every village there are one or more women who are skilled in the art of midwifery; these women are called *pekein mama*—either "little mother" or "mother of little children." At the time of childbirth, the pekein mama is assisted by four little girls from about ten to twelve years of age. The pekein mama uses a liberal quantity of hot water in the process of delivery. In the event of an abnormal condition, it is the duty of the pekein mama to deliver the child as skilfully as possible. The woman bears the ordeal of childbirth with the usual primitive fortitude, although the pains of labour seem to be as great among these people as among women of more civilized countries. The mother must drink only hot water for three months after the birth of the child.

846 847

853 Children are nursed at the breast for a period of three months. They are then fed a little mush made of cassava to which is gradually added rice, a small amount of meat, eggs, and plenty of fruit, but periodical nursing may sometimes continue for as long as two years. The mothers often chew the food before giving it to their babies.

/121 cont./

843 [829] Sexual relations continue during the whole pregnancy, for they are reputed to be indispensable for the formation of the mind of the child, which is thought to come from the father; also, for a man whose wife is pregnant there can be no question of abandoning her nor even of leaving for a long trip without the permission of the head of her lineage.

843 789 Forecasting of the birth. Divinatory rituals are carried out from the first months of pregnancy to forecast whether the childbirth will be easy or not. For that one goes to an old man who "knows" one of these remedies. There are several: one consists in making a small hole in the center of a cross outlined on the ground, pouring into it a decoction of magic herbs kept secret, and putting an egg into it. The remedy-master then says: "If the childbirth is to be easy, the egg must be crushed as soon as my foot bears down /122/ on it." They state that sometimes the egg resists crushing: from this they deduce that the delivery will be difficult.

844 [789] [845] When the time for delivery arrives, concern is centered on the danger of maleficent human entities, ɔgi sani, which try to become incarnate in the child. The woman is shut up in the house, all of its exits are blocked off, and ɔbiaman are called to perform rites of protection all around the house. If delivery is difficult, that is attributed to the fact that one of these entities succeeded in getting into the house in spite of the precautions taken.

846 602 The ɔbiaman are called to "wash" the woman with the help of appropriate remedies.. Only in serious cases are men allowed to enter the house. As a general rule, during the first eight days only women related to the mother may enter. (Care is even taken as far as possible to get as midwife (mena) an old woman related to the mother.)

/122 cont./

845 [621] Observation at Maripasoula, November 3, 1956. The wife of Baïna, boatman of the border-fixing mission, gave birth at Pikin Tabiki, small farming village where she works with her mother and the latter's husband. Baïna went to be present at the delivery.

It was very long and dramatic. According to Baïna, an ɔgi sani had entered the child's body, making him stiff and impossible to extract. As a last resort they called a neighbor, T..., known for having a good gita. He called his gadu who revealed an efficacious remedy, since after the body of the sick woman was bathed with the prescribed leaves, the delivery ended successfully.

846 [515] Since we were leaving on our trip, it remained to find someone to take his place in fulfilling one of the husband's duties: cutting the supply of wood for heating the water necessary for the hot douches /showers?/ the mother was going to be given several times a day for about three months. He made an agreement [465] for that with Kwata, his mother-in-law's husband, to whom he will pay about 1,000 francs.

851 613 [603] Presentation of the child. On the eighth day the maternal grandmother (or great-grandmother if she is still living) takes the child and gives it to another ancestress of the same lineage, stationed in front of the house. The latter presents it to the family. Then [769] [778] [782] the head of the lineage, without taking the child, goes to the fraga tiki to make an offering of tafia, asking the ancestors to protect it.

For example, for the birth of A... (Lapé Tabiki village), son of O Yundu (L2, G60), it was Asakundu, grandmother of Yundu and great-grandmother of the child, who came to take him in the house and gave him over to her sister Térésa (L2, E57) to present him to the family (see genealogical table of the Lapé lineage, fraction 2).

/122 cont./

846 834 856 Interruption of conjugal relations after the birth. For three months after delivery the mother must stay away from men and even avoid touching them. Conjugal relations must be interrupted until the child begins to walk alone (eleven to 14 months). However, it is tolerated (but disapprovingly) that they be interrupted only for the time until the child begins to drag himself [842] on his knees /123/ (eight months). They cite the example of Baïna's wife who has puny children after pregnancies at too short intervals.

846 834 862 178 593 Actually, the interruption of conjugal relations tends to be reduced more and more, the women having condensed milk available and tending to reduce the duration of breast feeding.

Each woman acts as she wishes in this respect; the husband has no power to restrain her.

The Name

551 553 Existence of several independent names. Each Boni has two names, the gaã nɛm or big name, given by the father, and the pikin nɛm or little name, given by the mother.

These two names are given in totally independent fashion. Generally the pikin nɛm is given first; in former days they used to wait until the child was six to eight months old; nowadays it is given at the end of a few weeks. The head of the lineage does not intervene either in the choice or the giving of the name.

As a matter of fact, nearly three-quarters of the Boni are designated by one single name, either because the father and mother agreed to give the same name or because one of the two names fell into disuse.

To these two principal names may be added any number of names and cognomens given by the grandparents and later by friends or spouse; often one of the names ends by being given